

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 28 and 29 without prejudice and without disclaimer of subject matter.

Please amend Claims 1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 20-22, 30-32 and 34 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An information gathering system, comprising:
- at least one computer;
 - ~~an identification database accessible by the computer, the identification database including user identification information;~~
 - at least one output device coupled to the computer;
 - a software component executable by the at least one computer, the software component being arranged to:
 - assign a unique identifier corresponding to an official ballot;
 - validate the user; and
 - cause the computer to provide output a voting stub and the official ballot on the output device ~~corresponding to a customized ballot prepared based upon a validated user response to a specified request for information, the official ballot and the voting stub including the unique identifier corresponding to the official ballot; and~~
 - ~~a user intent verification system to allow the user to confirm that a recorded vote database represents accurate user intent.~~
2. (Original) The system according to claim 1, further comprising an input device coupled to the computer wherein the software component is further arranged to read a completed customized ballot from the input device, check the completed customized ballot for errors and to cause the computer to provide output to the output device corresponding to the completed customized ballot.
3. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, wherein the official ballot includes the user's vote and ~~wherein the software component is also arranged to assign a unique identifier to the validated user, the unique identifier accessible only~~ is visible to the

validated user to allow ~~for confidential verification of~~ the validated user to verify the integrity of the validated user's ~~response~~ vote as indicated on the official ballot.

4. (Original) The system according to claim 3, further including a forms database accessible by the computer, the forms database including form formatting and content information.

5. (Original) The system according to claim 4, wherein the forms database corresponds to an official ballot forms database.

6. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 3, further comprising:
a tabulation database, the tabulation database being accessible by the validated user by verifying using the unique identifier randomly generated for the validated user user's official ballot.

7. (Original) The system according to claim 6, wherein the tabulation database corresponds to an official vote tabulation database.

8. (Original) The system according to claim 6, wherein the validated user accesses the tabulation database via a communication network.

9. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim [[8]] 1, wherein ~~the communication network is the Internet~~ a bar code corresponding to the unique identifier is printed on at least one of the voting stub and the official ballot.

10. (Original) The system according to claim 3, wherein the unique identifier is a randomly generated number.

11. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim [[1]] 2, wherein the customized ballot is prepared based on specified request for information includes at least one of a ~~request for~~ validated user's address and a ~~request for~~ an allowable language preference.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~gathering information about a user using a computer voting~~, comprising:

verifying that the user is eligible to participate by consulting a first database;

~~assigning a unique identifier to an eligible user;~~

customizing a ~~questionnaire~~ ballot by consulting a second database;

requiring the eligible user to provide to the computer a response to the ~~questionnaire~~ ballot;

producing a first tangible record of the response including a unique identifier corresponding to the response;

producing a second tangible record of the response;

collecting the second tangible record;

storing the second tangible record; and

~~confirming using the unique identifier to allow a user to confirm~~ that the second tangible record represents accurate user intent.

13. (Original) The method according to claim 12, further comprising rejecting users not listed in the first database.

14. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 13, wherein requiring the verified user to provide to the computer a response to the ~~questionnaire~~ ballot comprises:

inputting the response into the computer;

checking the response by comparing the response to a selected standard;

rejecting the response if the response does not meet the requirements of the selected standard; and

requiring the verified user to correct the rejected response.

15. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein the selected standard includes a single choice indicated for each individual ~~questionnaire~~ ballot item.

16. (Original) The method according to claim 14, wherein the first database is an identification database comprised of user identification information.

17. (Original) The method according to claim 14, wherein the first database corresponds to an official voter registration database.


18. (Original) The method according to claim 14, wherein the first database is comprised of a list of registered voters.

19. (Original) The method according to claim 12, wherein the second database is a forms database, the forms database being comprised of form formatting and content information.

20. (Currently Amended) A method of voting using a computer, the method comprising:

~~checking the eligibility of a potential voter by accessing a voter eligibility database;~~
~~rejecting the potential voter who is deemed to be a non-eligible voter;~~
~~receiving an address of an eligible voter;~~
~~customizing a ballot based on a selected criteria by accessing a ballot form database;~~
~~displaying the ballot to the eligible voter;~~
~~receiving the ballot from the eligible voter;~~
~~checking the ballot for errors by comparing the ballot to a selected standard;~~
receiving a voter's voting instructions;
printing an official ballot, the official ballot including a unique identifier corresponding to the official ballot;
allowing the potential voter to confirm that the printed official ballot represents ~~accurate voter intent~~ the voter's voting instructions;
~~collecting the official ballot;~~ and
printing a stub ~~to be retained by the eligible voter,~~ the stub including the unique identifier.

21. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 20, further comprising:

 generating a unique identifier;
~~causing the unique identifier to be printed on the stub and the official ballot;~~
updating a voting results database which includes the unique identifier for each official ballot tabulated;
providing access to the voting results database to the eligible voter; and
requiring the eligible voter to input the unique identifier in order to gain access to the voting results database.

22. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 20, further including customizing a ballot based on a selected criteria by accessing a ballot form database, wherein the selected criteria includes at least one of the eligible voter's address and allowable language preference.

23. (Original) The method according to claim 21, wherein the unique identifier is a randomly generated number.

24. (Original) The method according to claim 20, further comprising receiving language preferences from the voter.

25. (Original) The method according to claim 20, further comprising receiving handicap access preferences from the voter.

26. (Original) The method according to claim 24, further comprising receiving handicap preferences from the voter.

27. (Original) The method according to claim 21, wherein the voting results database corresponds to an official voting results database.

28-29. CANCELLED

30. (Currently Amended) ~~A method of voting which preserves the secrecy of the ballot while allowing a voter to verify the integrity of a vote~~ The method according to claim 20, further comprising:

- scanning ~~the~~ a completed ballot;
- comparing the scanned completed ballot with a predetermined standard to detect voter errors;
- printing an error report if an error is detected;
- printing ~~an~~ the official ballot and stub if no errors are detected.

31. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~27~~ 21, further comprising providing voting instructions to the voter.

32. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~27~~ 21, further comprising~~[[:]]~~ providing an opportunity to register a first time voter if the potential voter is determined to be eligible.

33. (Original) The method according to claim 30, further comprising:
updating a voting results database with the ballot received from the eligible voter;
providing access to the voting results database to the eligible voter; and
requiring the eligible voter to input the unique identifier in order to gain access to the voting results database.

34. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 3 wherein the unique identifier is printed on the ~~customized~~ official ballot and voting stub to allow for confidential verification of the integrity of the validated user's response without giving the validated user a physical copy of does not include the response user's vote.
